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Cl. Cont.
positive terminal of said first piece of power equipment and a negative terminal of said second piece of power feed equipment by at least one electrical power connector located on at least one additional landmass.

REMARKS

Responsive to the Official Action mailed April 11, 2003, Applicant provides the following remarks. Reconsideration and reexamination are respectfully requested.

Claim Amendments

Independent claims 1 and 11 have been amended to require at least one electrical power connector located at a landmass for connecting the claimed cables segments. Support for this amendment may be found throughout the specification and drawings, e.g. in FIGS. 5-7, page 10, lines 2-5, etc. No new matter has been added.

35 U.S.C. §102 Rejection

Claims 1, 4, 5, 6, 9, and 10 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Ohta et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,644,466). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Ohta et al. teaches a configuration for a submarine cable branching unit. The branching unit is located in the sea for connecting optical cables emanating from cable landing stations and for feeding electric power to the repeaters in the cables. FIG. 1A, and Col. 1, lines 9-16. Three cable stations, i.e. stations A, B and C are linked at a node N in the submarine branching unit

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(BU). Each of the cable landing stations feeds electric power to the branching unit (BU). Col. 5, lines 48-49, 54-56 and 60-62.

In complete contrast, independent claim 1 requires a configuration including a first cable for carrying data signals between "a first landmass and a second landmass", a second cable for carrying data signals between "the first landmass and a third landmass", and a connector "located on said first landmass" for connecting power conductors of the first and second cables. The connection between the first and second cables is thus made by a connector at the first landmass. This configuration advantageously eliminates the need for power feed equipment, e.g. the first landmass. This is confirmed in the specification with at page 9, lines 18-21 respect to the exemplary embodiment of FIG. 5:

..[T]he devices of two cable segments 505a and 505b may be powered by a single pair of power feed equipment 507a and 507b, providing significant savings in installing and operating the communication system using these cable segments.

Applicant finds nothing in Ohta that teaches or suggests a system including a first cable for carrying data signals between "a first landmass and a second landmass", a second cable for carrying data signals between "the first landmass and a third landmass", and a connector "located at the first landmass" for connecting power conductors of the first and second cables, as required by independent claim 1. In fact, the branching unit (BU) in Ohta is clearly defined as being a submarine unit, not a landmass as suggested by the Examiner, and there is nothing in Ohta that suggests making an electrical connection using a connector on the "first landmass", as claimed. As such, the configuration of Ohta fails to achieve the advantages attendant with the claimed configuration since it uses a power feed from each of the cable landing stations to protect against power failure from one of the stations.

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Since essential limitations of independent claim 1 are not found in the Ohta, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's rejection of claim 1 in view of Ohta cannot stand. Claims 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10 depend, either directly or ultimately from claim 1, and include the limitations of claim 1 by virtue of their dependency. As such, Applicant requests that the rejection of claims 1, 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as being anticipated by Ohta (U.S. Patent No. 5,644,466) be withdrawn upon reconsideration.

35 U.S.C. §103 Rejection

Claims 2, 3, 7, 8 and 11-15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohta in view of the prior art figures submitted by the applicant. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Claims 2, 3, 7 and 8 depend, either directly or ultimately, from independent claim 1. By virtue of their dependency these claims require, in addition to their own specific limitations, a system including a first cable for carrying data signals between "a first landmass and a second landmass", a second cable for carrying data signals between "the first landmass and a third landmass", and a connector "located on the first landmass" for connecting power conductors of the first and second cables. As discussed above, Ohta fails to teach or suggest these essential limitations. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2, 3, 7 and 8 are in condition for allowance for the reasons adduced above with respect to claim 1. It is requested, therefore, that the rejection of claims 2, 3, 7 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) in view of Ohta and applicant's prior art figures be withdrawn upon reconsideration.

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Independent claim 11, as amended, requires a "plurality of cable segments" that are electrically connected "in series" between a positive terminal of a first piece of power equipment on a "first landmass" and a negative terminal of a second piece of power feed equipment on a "second landmass" by at least one "electrical power connector located on at least one additional landmass." As discussed above, Ohta teaches a submarine branching unit for protecting against power failure associated with a feed from a landing station. There is nothing in Ohta that suggests making an electrical connection using a connector "on at least one additional landmass", as claimed.

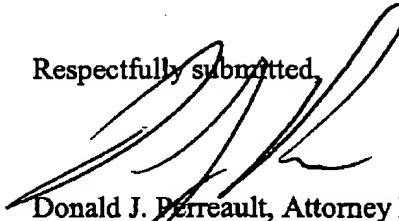
Applicant's prior art figures do not provide the missing teaching. As such, the claimed invention could not have been obvious from the Ohta combined with the applicant's prior art figures. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 11-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohta in view of applicant's prior art figures should be withdrawn upon reconsideration.

In light of the foregoing remarks, it is believed that all of the presently pending claims are in a condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested. In the event the Examiner deems personal contact desirable in disposition of this application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney at (603) 668-6560.

No fees are believed to be due. In the event there are any fee deficiencies, please charge them (or credit any overpayment) to our Deposit Account No. 50-2121.

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Respectfully submitted,



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IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1 and 11 have been amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A system for providing communications between communication devices located on different landmasses, comprising:

first and second cables, wherein each of said first and second cables further comprises one or more data signal carrying lines and an electrical power conductor, wherein said first cable carries data signals between communication devices of a first landmass and a second landmass, and said second cable carries data signals between communication devices of the first landmass and a third landmass; and

an electrical power connector located on said first landmass and connecting said electrical power conductors of said first and second cables so that electrical current can flow between said power conductors of said first and second cables.

11. (Amended) A communication system, comprising:

a first cable station located on a first landmass, having a first piece of power feed equipment;

a second cable station located on a second landmass, having a second piece of power feed equipment;

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a plurality of cable segments, each connecting communication networks of two landmasses, wherein each of said plurality of cable segments includes an electrical power conductor and one or more data signal carrying lines, and wherein said electrical power conductors of said plurality of cable segments are electrically connected in series between a positive terminal of said first piece of power equipment and a negative terminal of said second piece of power feed equipment by at least one electrical power connector located on at least one additional landmass.